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UNCLAS AMMAN 002143

SIPDIS

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STATE PASS TO AID

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON MIDDLE EAST

Summary

-- King Abdullah II's meeting and talk with the Senate members yesterday dominated front-page coverage in all the papers published today, May 1. In his talk, the King reviewed Jordan's principles and stance towards the Palestinian issue. He stresses Jordan's support for the Palestinian people and for establishing a Palestinian state. He reiterated the call for a mechanism and a timetable to end the Israeli occupation and establish the Palestinian state. He also stressed the demise of the options of the "alternative homeland" or the "Jordan option" as solutions to the Palestinian issue.

Representative Editorial Commentary

-- "Moving with a vision and plan"

Centrist, influential among the elite English daily Jordan Times (05/01) editorializes: "His Majesty King Abdullah's message is clear and direct: Jordan's priority is to end the suffering of the Palestinian people and the usurpation of their rights. Demonstrations and condemnations are a legitimate and even necessary expression of solidarity with a people denied their right to freedom and anger against a rogue state whose policies are threatening the stability of the whole region. But the realization of the Palestinian people's right to statehood on their national soil demands sustainable political and diplomatic efforts rooted in a clear vision and plan of action. Beyond the provision of necessary support to help Palestinians as they face Israel's brutal aggression, Jordan has launched continuous political endeavors to garner enough pressure on Israel to halt its offensive on the Palestinians and reengage in negotiations. Sharon will not be able to stall any longer. With mounting international pressure and the exposure of his crimes against the Palestinians, he will soon have to roll back his tanks and engage in political talks the whole world says must lead to the establishment of a viable Palestinian state. In the meantime, the Arabs need to rally more support for the Palestinians and their legitimate demands, building a world consensus that the realization of Palestinian rights is a priority, which has to be achieved in order to bring about peace and stability to the Middle East. As King Abdullah said in an address to members of the Senate yesterday, this is where Jordan's efforts have been bearing fruit."

GNEHM